

Running With The Dubbbers



Many of you enjoyed the drivers test in our last letter. Here is another reason that we love living in Kenya so much. We have come across many businesses with interesting names. Here are a sampling of a few: "The Rich Cry Too Butchery"; "Soon Big Brain Academy" (primary school); "Victoria's Secret Communications" (cell phone shop); "Lazarus Funeral Home"; "Mzungu [white person] In The Mist" (tourist gift shop); and "Sewage" (taxi service). ☺



In the News

While in Canada we have often watched the news from other places in the world and thought, "I'm sure glad that we are not there right now." This January we were "there" and experienced all of the emotions of being in a country on the brink of collapse after an election gone bad. It was a trying time but one that spurred us on to spiritual growth and a deeper understanding of what is important in life. We were thrilled with the news that a coalition government will now be formed. We will see what the future holds for Kenya. We are as committed as ever to being here. But it is still a tenuous situation.



Visiting an IDP camp. Cassidy and Titus had a lot of fun playing with the kids.

Human Suffering

The politicians have been fighting it out in hotels and lodges but the victims really have been the people of Kenya. We have had opportunity to visit a camp of IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons). We listened to the awful stories about how their neighbors turned on them, even after living there for fifty or more years, because of their tribal background. They had barely escaped with their lives and are now living in tents provided by the Red Cross or in relatives' homes. They have no idea what the next step is. They have nothing. We took clothes and many others here at RVA have been helping with food distribution. On our recent trip to Uganda we passed through some of the areas hardest hit by violence and were overwhelmed with the amount of demolished and burnt out homes and businesses. Behind each of those places there are people that went through terrifying experiences. As parents, it is hard to think about our children being in the same situation as those parents and children were in. The children – that has been the hardest part.



A Trying Term

In January, our students arrived back to school three weeks after the intended arrival day due to the political unrest. We all made adjustments to the regular schedule to fit in the most important activities and to make sure everything got covered in school. Unfortunately many staff and students experienced numerous tragedies and trials in addition to the uncertainty in Kenya. We even had two staff families return to North America mid term. Most recently one of our dorm girl's parents were severely beaten in Sudan and had to be air lifted to Nairobi. We are so thankful that their lives were spared and that their mission has been so good at debriefing the family and making sure that their children have had lots of time with them. We have felt very spiritually attacked but God has been our strength.

Uganda

After being through such an emotionally trying time we decided to set out on an adventure, sans children. They happily stayed at RVA for a fun four days with grandpa and grandma. We visited a family who sends their children to RVA and also saw the city where some of our past dorm girls lived. We had many adventures but the greatest by far was rafting the Nile River. With no prior experience we braved seventeen rapids, some of them Class 5. Fortunately, the Nile is so deep that it is relatively safe (our guide said it was "forgiving"). Of course with rapids named "Dead Dutchman" and "Vengeance" we were a little nervous. We went with eight other missionaries from RVA and we had a wonderful time. It was good to see the Ugandan culture (very different than Kenya), different missionary ministries, and also to enjoy this beautiful continent that God has led us to. We came back relaxed and refreshed.



Communication With You

We have sent very little personal communication this term. Our computer situation here at RVA has been hit and miss over the past few months. We have as much bandwidth for seven hundred people here as one home would have in North America. We realized when we were home this past furlough that it is going to get harder and harder to maintain friendships in Canada. We do care so much for all of you though and want you to know that. We could not be here if it were not for all of your encouragement and support of us. Thank you!

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Children of the King

In spite of so much stress and tragedy during this past term, we have a good Father that loves us so much and gives us good gifts. Our children, dorm girls, teaching responsibilities, mentoring of students, and coaching have gone very well. It is so fabulous to be in our fifth year here at RVA and to experience such great relationships with students and staff.



Easter Egg hunt on a very cold and foggy morning. We are into rainy season right now.

Cassidy – She continues to thrive in school. She loves the school plays that she gets to participate in. She is playing the piano and has recently been taking ballet lessons from a grade twelve girl. She just turned eight on March 30th.

Titus – He loves to be busy all of the time. His recent project has been Maple. He built her a house and helped to repair the fence around

our yard. He has also loved being old enough to participate in elementary sports. He will be six on May 16th.

Ella – She is crawling and walking along furniture, walls, etc. She is a fearless little girl and has had many bumps and bruises in her travels. We had a scare when she pulled a heavy fire place screen down on her. She had a mild contusion but was back at it a few hours later. She is eleven months old and has no teeth. Are infant dentures in her future?

Dorm Girls - They have been such a delight. We have hardly had a single discipline issue to deal with. They work hard at school and have a lot of fun. They communicate with us and participate in sports, band, outreach, etc. We have had really meaningful devotional times with them. It has been great. We always still need wisdom though as they ask us many questions about life and we are standing in as their parents when they are at school.

Teaching – Todd has continued to enjoy his classes and the curriculum that they have been working to update over the past couple years. Todd has also been researching how to make the gym and equipment safer and more effective – quite the challenge in Africa. His department head will be leaving next year so Todd is preparing to take on that

extra responsibility.

Coaching – Todd has just completed try-outs for volleyball season. He had many try out despite the season coinciding with the very popular sport of rugby. Kylie has just finished a very successful field hockey season. Her team was the best one that she has coached so far. They had great attitudes and she really enjoyed all of the time she spent with them. They made it to the semi final round in their league and ended up losing only in a shoot out with last year's Kenyan national champions.

Maple

Our home is finally complete with a new addition. We now have thirteen junior high girls, a second grader, a five year old, a baby, and now a puppy.



Maple

Maple has come to live with us. Maple is a Welsh corgi. We did not go looking for her but she found us (or found Titus to be precise). She is challenging our perfectionist tendencies but in a good way. She has been a fun addition to our home and has definitely aided in decreasing the lizard and spider population around our house.

Prayer Requests

- Pray for our national friends who have lived through some difficult things since the election. We are especially concerned for Harriet who helps us in the dorm. Her daughter had to go to a new school and there has been some unrest due to lack of food because of the incredible inflation. She is only 13 and it is hard for her to be so far away in a less than ideal situation. We are trying to help as much as we can.
- Pray for continued peace here in Kenya. Violence continues to pop up unexpectedly and there is certainly potential for things to fall apart in the government again.
- Pray for Todd as he prepares to take on the position of PE department head.
- We are in our last three months of two years with the girls that we have in our dorm right now. Pray that we will finish well and send them into grade nine prepared for more responsibilities.
- We have a very large turn over of staff next year.

Right now we do not know who will be teaching PE with Todd. Pray for someone that he can work well with and that will have fresh ideas and bring new energy.

- As our kids get older, pray that we will be able to give their needs priority and that we will balance our responsibilities with family well.

Support Situation

We continue to be in a good place support wise. Thank you so much! The inflation in Kenya (as in the rest of the world) has been unreal over the past few months. The paper said that it has hit a high of 22% over the past four months. We are paying double on a grocery trip now then what we would pay even two years ago. We hope that things do not continue in this direction although it does not look optimistic. We are still trying to raise finances for a vehicle. It continues to be difficult not to have one.

PROJECT IDEA: Our gym floor is desperately in need of replacing. If anyone is interested in being a part of that; please contact us.

Communication Info:

Mailing Address:

PO Box 80
Kijabe, Kenya
East Africa 00220

E-Mail Address:

tkdubber@kijabe.net
tkdubber@aimint.org

Phone Number:

011-254-20-3246-397



The Nile and beautiful Uganda